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ABSTRACT

At the same time that it is experiencing rapid growth, the field of adult education is struggling with its own maturation and development as a profession. One of the issues related to the professionalization of the adult education field is that of certification. Those who favor professional certification argue that it is a means to develop the profession because it is a practice that separates individual practitioners who are competent from those who are not. Those who argue against professional certification do so for a wide variety of reasons. Some believe that the certification process is incompatible with the philosophical assumptions underlying the field, whereas others feel that certification might divide an already fragmented field. Areas of discussion related to certification focus on (1) the major proficiencies needed by effective adult education practitioners; (2) the relationship of the proficiencies to performance and program quality; (3) appropriate determination and measurement of the proficiencies; and (4) the purpose of certification. Another controversy surrounds the determination of an appropriate credential and credentialing body. (A 32-item list of print resources and resource organizations is included.) (MN)

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

TRENDS AND ISSUES ALERTS

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CERTIFICATION IN ADULT EDUCATION

An Overview of Trends and Issues

At the same time that it is experiencing rapid growth, the field of adult education is struggling with its own maturation and development as a profession. One of the issues related to the professionalization of the field is that of certification. Members of the adult education profession have a variety of perspectives about certification. When asked about voluntary professional certification, most responding members of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) were very opposed to the idea of required teacher certification, but several felt that voluntary certification would be acceptable (Melton 1987).

Those who favor professional certification argue that it is a means to develop the profession because it is a practice that separates individual practitioners who are competent from those who are not (Galbraith 1987; Galbraith and Gilley 1986). Those who argue against it do so for a variety of reasons. Some believe that the certification process is incompatible with the philosophical assumptions underlying the field. Others feel that certification might further divide an already fragmented field (Galbraith and Gilley 1986).

Areas of discussion related to certification focus on (1) the major proficiencies needed by effective adult education practitioners, (2) the relationship of the proficiencies to performance and program quality, (3) appropriate determination and measurement of the proficiencies, and (4) the purpose of certification. Another controversy surrounds the determination of an appropriate credential and credentialing body (i.e., should the credential be professional certification, accreditation, or licensure, and should it be issued by a professional association, an agency, or a political body). Professionalizing adult education personnel is a complex issue that requires extensive study and analysis (Galbraith and Gilley 1986).

This **Trends and Issues Alert** lists a number of resources that provide information on professional certification. Included are organizations that maintain certification programs for their members, as well as print sources and additional resource organizations.

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Print Resources

Aker, G. "Teacher Certification in Adult Education." In *Teacher Certification in Adult Education*, edited by B. R. Lyle. Austin: Health, Education and Welfare Region VI Staff Development Project, 1975.

Brown, C. D. "Reappraising the Professionalism of Adult Education." *Adult Education Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (Winter 1984): 97-104. (ERIC No. EJ 289 247).

Bunning, R. L. *Skills and Knowledges for the Adult Educator: A Delphi Study*. Tempe: Arizona State University, 1976. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 123 394).

Burton, Patrice. *Certification of Adult Education Teachers*, 1986. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 273 749).

Cameron, C. "Certification Should Be Established." In *Examining Controversies in Adult Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 200 100).

Carlson, R. A. "Professionalization of Adult Education: An Historical-Philosophical Analysis." *Adult Education* 28, no. 1 (February 1977): 53-63. (ERIC No. EJ 173 053).

Cervero, Ronald M. "The Predicament of Professionalism for Adult Education." *Adult Literacy and Basic Education* 9, no. 1 (1985): 11-17. (ERIC No. EJ 326 240).

Cervero, Ronald M. "Professionalization as an Issue for Continuing Education." *New Directions for Continuing Education*, no. 36 (Winter 1987): 67-78. (ERIC No. EJ 363 091).

Conchelos, Mary. "Certification, Re-certification, and Continuing Education." *Canadian Library Journal* 40, no. 2 (April 1983): 61-62. (ERIC No. EJ 281 388).

Cope, Judith L. "Feasibility of Requiring and Delivering Certification for ABE Teachers in Pennsylvania." In *PAACE-SETTER*, Volume 1, Number 1, edited by Robert J. Nassen. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education, 1984. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 252 656).

Galbraith, Michael W. "Certification Would Advance Professional Practice." *Lifelong Learning* 11, no. 2 (October 1987): 15, 18.

Galbraith, Michael W., and Gilley, Jerry W. "An Examination of Professional Certification." *Lifelong Learning* 9, no. 2 (October 1985): 12-15. (ERIC No. EJ 323 115).

Galbraith, Michael W., and Gilley, Jerry W. *Professional Certification: Implications for Adult Education and HRD.* Information Series no. 307. Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1986. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 272 767).

Gilley, Jerry W., and Galbraith, Michael W. "Examining Professional Certification." *Training and Development Journal* 40, no. 6 (June 1986): 60-61. (ERIC No. EJ 337 052).

Gilley, Jerry W., and Galbraith, Michael W. "Professionalization and Professional Certification." In *Adult Education Research Conference Proceedings (28th, Laramie, Wyoming, May 21-23, 1987),* compiled by Robert P. Inkster. Laramie: University of Wyoming, May 1987. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 283 936).

Griffith, William, and Marcus, E. *Accreditation, Certification and Licensing for Adult Education Teachers--An Examination of Facts, Opinions and Options.* Springfield: Illinois State Board of Education, 1978. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 194 704).

Houle, Cyril O. *Continuing Learning in the Professions* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980.

James, Waynne B. "Certification Is Unfeasible and Unnecessary." In *Examining Controversies in Adult Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 200 100).

McLagan, Patricia. *Models for Excellence: The Conclusions and Recommendations of the ASTD Training and Development Competency Study.* Washington, DC: American Society for Training and Development, 1983.

Melton, Jane. "Your Replies--Certification for Adult Education." *Online with Adult and Continuing Educators,* 5, no. 3 (September 1987): 6.

Rockhill, Kathleen. "Mandatory Continuing Education for Professionals: Trends and Issues." *Adult Education* 33, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 106-116. (ERIC No. EJ 275 803).

Rockhill, Kathleen. "The Mystique of Certification, Education, and Professionalism: In the Service of Whom?" In *Certification, Credentialing, Licensing and the Renewal Process. Proceedings of a Conference,* edited by James S. Long and Roger Boshier. DeKalb: ERIC Clearinghouse on Career Education, Northern Illinois University; Seattle: Northwest Adult Education Association and Washington Continuing Education Association, 1976. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 129 971).

Rowls, Michael D., and Hanes, Madlyn L. "Standards for Professional Renewal: Beyond Accreditation and Certification." *Action in Teacher Education* 7, nos. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1985): 21-25. (ERIC No. EJ 321 727).

Weaver, Roy A., and Kowalski, Theodore J. "The Case for Program Accreditation of Doctoral Degrees in Adult Education." *Lifelong Learning* 10, no. 7 (May 1987): 14-15, 26-27. (ERIC No. EJ 353 410).

Resource Organizations

The following organizations may be consulted about the certification programs they have initiated for their members:

American Association for Counseling and Development, 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304 (703/823-9800).

American Compensation Association, 6619 North Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85253 (602/951-9191).

Association for Educational Communication and Technology, Division of Instructional Development, 1126 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036 (202/466-4780).

Institute of Management Consultants, 19 West 44th Street, Suite 810-811, New York, NY 10036 (212/921-2885).

National Society for Performance and Instruction, 1126 16th Street, NW, Suite 102, Washington, DC 20036 (202/861-0777).

Personnel Accreditation Institute, 606 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 (703/548-3440).

The following organizations can provide additional information about certification:

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, 1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 420, Washington, DC 20036 (202/463-6333).

American Society for Training and Development, Box 1443, 1630 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22313 (703/683-8100.)

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